

The Director of Central Intelligence

Washington, D. C. 20505

25 October 1984

The Honorable Anthony C. Beilenson  
Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence  
U. S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D. C. 20515

Dear Tony,

I'd like you to look through the much publicized text of the FDN manual on psychological operations together with the code of conduct prepared in pocket size for every FDN soldier to carry with him at all times. You will see that the thrust and purpose of this material is, as Senator Wallop has said publicly, on the whole quite different from the impression that has been created in the media. The ultimate distortion appeared in this morning's NEW YORK TIMES editorial which speaks of the Agency "having to be stopped from illegal minings and murders." This distortion of reality must be corrected.

Let me describe these documents and their contents to help you work your way through them. They were prepared in the political section of the FDN with the help of an advisor provided by the CIA. The code of conduct explains that the objective of the FDN is the development of a democratic and pluralistic government in Nicaragua. It describes the need to achieve a reconciliation of the Nicaraguan family, to establish social justice and human rights in Nicaragua, to restore the freedoms violated by the Sandinistas, and to achieve economic reform and greater social mobility. The manual, entitled Psychological Operations in Guerrilla Warfare, was prepared by and addressed to people who had made the fateful decision to engage in armed combat in order to resist oppression by a totalitarian regime. Its purpose is stated as assuring that every combatant will be "highly motivated to engage in propaganda face to face, to the same degree that he is motivated to fight." It aims to make every FDN guerrilla "persuasive in face to face communication--a propagandist combatant--in his contact with the people; he must be capable of giving 5 or 10 logical reasons why, for example, a peasant must give him fabric, needle and thread to mend his clothes. When the guerrilla behaves this way, enemy propaganda will never turn him into an enemy in the eyes of the population." It goes on to deal with developing political awareness, using group dynamics, interaction with the people "live, eat and work with the people," respect for human rights, teaching and civic action.

There is a section headed "guerrilla arms are the strength of the people against an illegal government." This deals with protecting the guerrillas and citizens when a town is occupied. There is also a section on the training and operations of armed propaganda teams, made up of six to ten members charged with raising political consciousness within Nicaragua and personal persuasion within the population. Again, the emphasis is on education, avoiding combat if possible, "not turning the town into a battlefield." That context puts into perspective the four passages with which the whole document and the FDN psychological operations have been characterized. Two of these four passages were deleted by the FDN.

Of the other two, one advises on how to explain to the population if a guerrilla, having "tried to stop the informant without shooting," should shoot that individual. The other uses the word "neutralize" in dealing with the problem of removing local officials on occupying a town.

It is important to note that these two passages are in the context of entering or occupying a community and dealing with a situation in which actual or potential resistance remains. They are preceded by admonitions that the "enemies of the people, the Sandinista officials or agencies, must not be mistreated in spite of the criminal actions even though the guerrilla forces may have suffered casualties" and also that "whenever it is necessary to use armed force during an occupation or a visit to a town or a village," the guerrillas are to "explain to the population that first of all this is being done to protect them, the people not the guerrillas themselves" and that "this action while not desirable is necessary because the final objective of the insurrection is a free and democratic society where acts of force are not necessary."

Sincerely,

William J. Casey

Enclosures